IN HONOR OF JOEL ''FRANK'' TOLLER OF NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFONRIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 9, 2004

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my good friend Frank Toller, an extraordinary citizen from my hometown of St. Helena, California, who has devoted his life to public service. He is being honored today for his contributions to the community.

In 1997 Frank was elected to serve as mayor of St. Helena, California. In that same year he co-founded the law firm of Toiler & Novak LLP. He served as mayor until 1999, when he then moved to the position of Vice Mayor. He served as Vice Mayor until 2003.

Frank has been involved in other community activities as well, including spending 15 years as a Little League coach. Between 1980–1991 he was a St. Helena Unified School District Trustee, serving twice as board chair. He is also a member of the Community Foundation of the Napa Valley and a Rotary Foundation board member. In June 2004, he organized the Maria project which provides financial assistance to a deserving female Hispanic student who wishes to attend the Engineering program at UC Davis.

A highly regarded member of the Napa Valley community, Frank Toller was born in Waseca, Minnesota. Frank Toller received his B.A. in Political Science from the University of San Francisco in 1961. In 1968 he graduated from USF law school. He is a loving father to two children, Joel and Chelsea. He is an outdoor enthusiast who loves fishing and hiking.

The St. Helena Chamber of Commerce is recognizing Frank Toller for his outstanding contributions to the community, at the 2004 Citizen of the Year dinner on Saturday, August 21, 2004.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, Frank Toller is a dedicated public servant who has made many great contributions to our community. It is appropriate that we honor him today.

A SALUTE TO ANDY BEY

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 9, 2004

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, as Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Chairman of the Jazz Forum and Concert, which occurs during our Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference, I rise today to salute the lifetime achievements of one of the most distinguished artists in American music history, Andy Bey. Earlier this year, Bey was named the Jazz Journalist Association's 2004 Male Vocalist of the year.

The following biography, found on Bey's own web page, chronicles a career of accomplishment deserving of such high recognition, and of this body's thoughtful attention and respect:

Born in 1939, the Newark, NJ native was a genuine child prodigy as a pianist and singer, garnering appearances at the famed Apollo Theater and on television's Spotlight On Harlem and The Star Time Kids, sharing stages with the likes of Louis Jordan, Sarah Vaughan and Dinah Washington, before he turned 18. He then formed a vocal trio alongside his sisters Salome and Geraldine and embarked for Europe; Andy & The Bey Sisters were celebrated regulars at The Blue Note in Paris and other venues in Europe from the late 1950s into the early 1960s, when they returned to the U.S. and continued to perform and record (for RCA and Prestige) until the trio disbanded in 1966.

For the two decades thereafter, Bey recorded and performed with such notables as McCoy Tyner, Lonnie Liston Smith, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, Eddie Harris and others. He was featured vocalist on Gary Bartz's acclaimed Harlem Bush Music projects and for an extended period with Horace Silver, including Silver's The United States of Mind album sequence. In 1991, Bey returned to Europe to teach vocal instruction in Austria; he remained there until 1993, when he returned to the States to record his ''comeback album,'' accompanied only by his own piano, called Ballads, Blues & Bey.

One of the great unsung heroes of jazz singing, Andy Bey is a commanding interpreter of lyrics who has a wide vocal range and a big, rich, full voice. Bey enjoys a following that swears by him; nonetheless, he isn't nearly as well known as he should be.

The release of Ballads, Blues & Bey in 1996, and his subsequent Shades of Bey, recorded with Bartz, Victor Lewis, Peter Washington and other jazz notables and released in 1998, heralded Bey's ''renaissance'' in the business he's been in for nearly five decades. Which leaves Bey somewhat bemused: ''I never went away, actually. I don't know about this renaissance. '' It's . . . well, it's new in a sense, but it's not like I left the business.''

Bey has continued to make his presence felt in the jazz arena with the release of Tuesday's in Chinatown in 2001, and his latest outing earlier this year on Savoy entitled American Song.

IN HONOR OF AGNES FRONCKOWIAK

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 9, 2004

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Agnes Fronckowiak of Slavic Village, as she gathers with family and friends to commemorate her September 4th birthday, 90 years young, and as lively as ever.

With family central to her life, Mrs. Fronckowiak and her late husband, Casimir, raised 4 children, and taught them the significance of family, faith and giving back to the community. Today, these close family ties continue on with each new generation, as Mrs. Fronckowiak is blessed with grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Beyond caring for her family, Mrs. Fronckowiak has been an involved member of the community, and continues to dedicate her time and talents in service to others, efforts which are reflected throughout Slavic Village. She was a long-time member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parent Teacher Union and held the position of President of the St. Stan's Golden Agers for nearly 25 years. As an active member of the Golden Agers, Mrs. Fronckowiak plans and organizes senior trips and events. Her energy, agility and joy for living serve as a significant example that life's possibilities and joys abound for each of us, regardless of our age.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor of Mrs. Agnes Fronckowiak, as we gather together to celebrate her 90th birthday. Mrs. Fronckowiak continues to be an inspiration to everyone in her life—especially to her family and friends. Her loyalty, friendship, convictions, boundless energy, and good works are invaluable gifts that she gives freely, and her dedication has uplifted the neighborhoods, churches and schools of Slavic Village. We wish her many blessings of continued health and happiness today, and all days to follow.

IN HONOR OF EDWARD B. PULVER

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 9, 2004

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mr. Edward B. Pulver for his outstanding and tireless commitment to the people of Hudson County and his dedication to the trade unions. Mr. Pulver will be memorialized on Thursday, September 9, 2004 by the City of Jersey City, New Jersey as they unveil 'Edward B. Pulver Way' in a ceremony at the corner of Washington and Dudley Streets in Jersey City, New Jersey.

A native of Jersey City, who lived in Bayonne for 35 years, Mr. Pulver was a voice for working men and women for more than five decades. He began sailing on railroad tugs in the New York/New Jersey harbor in the late 1940s, and became active in the Seafarers International Union (SIU) when the fleet he helped to organize chose to affiliate with the organization's Inland Boatman's Union. In 1990, Mr. Pulver became the vice president of the Seafarers International Union of North America, while simultaneously heading the SIU's office in Jersey City. Additionally, Mr. Pulver was the president and a founding member of the Hudson County Central Labor Council, and served on the state AFL–CIO executive board as Secretary-Treasurer.

Mr. Pulver founded many organizations and belonged to numerous community and civic groups, including the National Executive Board of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and the Hudson County (N.J.) Economic Development Corporation. He served as president of the Hudson County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for 16 years. Additionally, he served on the board of directors for the Hudson County School of Technology, as well as for Saint Francis Hospital and Christ Hospital.

Considered a godfather to the Filipino community, Mr. Pulver was a member of the Order of the Knights of Rizal, raised funds for several Filipino organizations, and brought thousands of Filipino-Americans to an annual three-day conference in Piney Point, Maryland at his personal expense for almost a decade. He also served as executive vice president of the Filipino and Americans As One organization, was the cofounder of the Philippine American Friendship Committee (PAFCOM), and was instrumental in organizing the first Philippine American Friendship parade. He also served as the first Grand Marshall of PAFCOM.

A member of America's greatest generation, Mr. Pulver was a U.S. Army veteran who served our great nation in Germany during World War II.

Mr. Pulver is survived by five daughters, two brothers, 10 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Edward B. Pulver: a seaman, labor rights organizer, philanthropist, community activist, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend. Mr. Pulver, we will miss your kindness, but your memory will live on in the hearts and minds of everyone you have touched with your generosity and friendship.

HONORING THE 367TH ENGINEER BATTALION

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 9, 2004

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, almost every Member of Congress has constituents who are honorably serving overseas in Afghanistan or Iraq. Many are regular military personnel, while others are serving in the National Guard or Reserves. They are all to be commended and thanked for their dedicated service to our nation.

Today I would like to recognize the service of one particular group of Minnesota soldiers in the 367th Engineer Battalion. The 367th Battalion is currently serving in Afghanistan where they are helping to clear Afghanistan's minefields of the millions of explosive devices left over from decades of conflict. Donning body armor, protective boots and face shields, the men and women of the 367th canvass the countryside looking for unexploded ordnance and other remnants of past battles in Afghanistan. Their work is dangerous and difficult, but they are doing a tremendous job.

All too often, the hard work of our military personnel in Afghanistan is overlooked and unknown to the American public. Unfortunately, many remarkable stories, like the story of the 367th Battalion, are never told.

I am pleased that a local paper in Minnesota has highlighted the work of the 367th and put the article on the front page. I mailed this article to the soldiers of the 367th in Afghanistan, so they are reminded that the families they protect back home in Minnesota are thinking of them and are thankful for their service. I would like to include this article (''A delicate and dangerous job''—July 7, 2004) in the RECORD following my remarks.

The reconstruction of Afghanistan will take many years and require a sustained U.S. commitment. Much more work needs to be done before the Afghan people can truly begin rebuilding their lives and providing for their children and families. I am proud that men and women from all across Minnesota—including those of the 367th Battalion—are playing an important role in this process.

[From the Star Tribune, July 6, 2004]

A DELICATE AND DANGEROUS JOB

(By Sharon Schmickle)

BAGRAM AIR BASE, AFGHANISTAN.—Inviting the danger that Afghans dread every day, Sgt. Gary Feldewerd manipulated a control panel inside his armored cab and started slapping the ground with chains in search of land mines and other unexploded weapons.

As the resulting dust plume drifted, Feldewerd, from New Munich, Minn., saw that the flail had uncovered a mortar shell and a battered explosives box.

The work that Feldewerd and other Army reservists in Minnesota's 367th Engineer Battalion are doing to help clear Afghanistan's minefields came too late to save Parwana Meer's right leg and Gulmarjan's life.

Gulmarjan, 13, was herding goats near his village, Lalander, in May. One goat strayed off the path. The boy ran to fetch it. And suddenly, his lower body exploded in a cloud of red vapor, his cousin said. A pile of stones marks where his family buried what was left of his remains.

Meer, also 13, was cooking rice in her family's mud and stone house near Bagram when an explosion shattered one of her legs below the knee and severely burned the other.

Sitting by her bed at a U.S. Army field hospital in June, her brother told a story that is all too familiar in this war-ravaged land where weapons continue to kill and maim long after the clashing armies have left.

Meer and her family returned this year to the village they had fled when it became a battleground between the Taliban and rival northern tribes, Naseer Meer said. What the villagers didn't know is that the retreating Taliban forces had booby trapped their houses—in the Meers' case, planting a mine under the kitchen's dirt floor.

Such tragedies are everyday occurrences in Afghanistan, one of the world's most heavily mined nations. Blasts from land mines and other ordnance kill or maim dozens of people every month.

No one knows how much unexploded military junk remains strewn around Afghanistan. By any estimate, there are more than 10 million explosive devices in a space the size of Texas, said Maj. Paul Mason of the Australian Army. He coordinates the Minnesota battalion's mine-clearing projects under the United Nations' larger effort in Afghanistan involving work by military and civilian groups from many nations.

CHILDREN VULNERABLE

In Afghanistan, where women have been secluded, three out of four victims are male. The blasts have been most deadly for children, however, because their vital organs are closer to the explosions. And children are more likely than adults to pick up strange objects. Especially tempting were toy-like ''butterfly mines'' the Soviets dropped from aircraft.

Most of the mines uncovered in Afghanistan were laid by Soviet forces and their supporters from 1979 to 1992, according to Human Rights Watch. But the United States provided mines to anti-Soviet mujahedeen fighters in the 1980s.

The United States is not known to have used anti-personnel land mines since the Gulf War in 1991. Still, it is sharply criticized by groups working to rid the world of land mines because it hasn't signed a mine ban treaty, ratified by 142 other nations, including Afghanistan.

Beyond mines, cluster bombs are a major concern because they scatter explosives that often lie in wait rather than going off on impact. Many remnants of the bombs the U.S.-led forces dropped during 2001 and 2002 were designed to deactivate after a set period, Human Rights Watch said, but critics aren't satisfied that the feature works.

The United States has paid for a good share of the land mine removal in Afghanistan, along with European nations, Japan and Canada.

Despite the global cooperation, no one expects Afghanistan to be mine-free anytime soon.

To understand why, join the Minnesota teams as they clear a patch of land near Bagram Air Base. The area is to be used for military operations now and eventually turned over to the Afghan people.

THE HYDREMA

Climbing into the Hydrema, the mine-clearing vehicle, is like getting into the cab of a construction crane, except instead of a long arm, this beast has a turntable holding a steel blast shield and a 72-chain flail. The cab's windshield is pocked and battered by blasts. The last battalion to use these machines set off an anti-tank mine. It blew out an engine and rear axle, but the soldier inside the armored cab survived.

There will be no stepping out of the cab, Feldewerd orders. Sometimes, he'll scramble over the top of the Hydrema to handle a problem. Feldewerd is operating one of three Hydremas working together to clear a lane just over 3 yards wide.

Bounce. Jolt. Slap. Slap. Slap.

Each of the 30-inch chains is spun into the ground with a force of 2,000 pounds per square inch. The dust is so blinding that Feldewerd has no idea what's being unearthed. The other two Hydrema operators spot for him. As the dust clears, they see an artillery casing from a tank round and a lot of other debris that may or may not blow up.

Whenever possible, the soldiers try to spot explosives without detonating them. When Feldewerd saw the mortar shell, he fixed its location with a global positioning device and reported it to explosives teams for disposal.

Since beginning work in late April, the Minnesota battalion and a private contractor working with the troops at Bagram and another airfield near Kandahar have uncovered hundreds of bombs, a dozen anti tank mines and more than 200 anti-personnel mines. They also have unearthed a well-fortified Soviet fighting position with a steel roof that was covered by dirt.

Scary stuff? Maybe. But Feldewerd is a study in cool control.

''I like the minefields,'' he said. ''Mostly because there isn't anybody out here bothering you.''

Indeed.

Once the heavy equipment operators have flailed a safe lane through a minefield, they hand off to a team that works the ground much like archeologists on a dig, probing and sifting dirt cupful by cupful. Except, of course, relics here are more volatile than dinosaur bones. This is slow, dusty work, much of it done while crawling or lying belly down.

Sgt. Steven Tyler from Sleepy Eye, Minn., is training others to use a device that resembles a beachcomber's metal detector. Only this gadget also has ground-penetrating radar capable of sizing up objects as deep as 8 inches.

Because this ground is littered with metal shrapnel and trash as banal as old sardine tins from Soviet mess kits, a metal detector alone would give so many false positives that the job would never get done, Tyler said. Further, some mines are mostly plastic and give only a weak hum on the metal detector.

''Ground-penetrating radar is a lifesaver out here,'' said Tyler, who learned to clear mines in Korea in 1988 and took extra training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri before deploying to Afghanistan. More than 100 troops are getting their first hands-on intensive training here in the minefields.

Donning body armor, protective boots and face shields, they work in pairs to clear branches off the safe lane. First the soldiers check a patch of soil for visible debris, then scan it with the metal detector/radar gizmo, marking suspicious spots. Finally, they get down on the ground and gingerly dig around the marked spots with a probe and garden trowel.